

Instructor - Dr. Ted Uyeno

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Hours -

Office: Mon 1:00-3:00, Tue 2:00-3:30, Fri 1:00-2:30

(Please confirm appointment by email)



Course: Lecture – Monday, 5:00-6:50, BSC 1202

Mandatory Biology seminar series – **Tuesday, 12:45-1:50, BSC 1023**

Course Description: This is the capstone course to finish your biology major; we will touch on the breadth of life science. You can expect to review different aspects of your prior coursework and learn new information. Ultimately, this class should leave you with a sense of the purpose of your college education. This course appraises students' ability to independently research current topics in biological science. Students are expected to competently present "state of the art" information in both oral and written formats.

Assessment: Biology 4900 is graded on an S/U (Pass/Fail) basis. You must complete, and receive a passing grade of at least 70% in, the following activities:

- A) Assignments** associated with the production of a well-written capstone research **thesis paper**. (Including drafts submitted to the peer-grading platform KRITIK)
- B) Participation** in an **oral presentation** of your thesis.
- C) Attendance and participation** in class and at the mandatory biology seminar series

In addition, you must also complete the:

- D) ETS Major Field Test** in Biology with a score of above 140.
- E) Biology Department Senior Exit Questionnaire**

Unsatisfactory final grade will be assigned to work of quality below the standard (70%).

Personal Responsibility: You must keep track of **all** assignment deadlines - late work will not be accepted without appropriate excuse. KRITIK assignments should be completed early because those deadlines are final. Your grades will be posted in Blazeview, so that you will know where you stand. If you are making low grades, come see me and make more effort on the assignments!

Emails: I do not check the Blazeview email system. Please use tauyeno@valdosta.edu to email me! I expect well-written and detailed emails with appropriate etiquette.

Attendance: Every student is expected to attend all class sessions **and** scheduled Biology Seminars. Please contact me ASAP if you have an official excuse as unexcused absences will seriously reduce attendance grades.

Your attendance grade will be calculated as follows:

No Absences at ALL	125%
1 Absence	100%
2 Absences	75%
3 Absences	50%
4 Absences	25%
More than 4	0%
More than 6	Automatic Failure

Course Management Platforms:

- Blazeview: VSU's Learning Management System - Check your account on a regular basis for grade updates, assignment uploads, and announcements.
- KRITIK: A peer-grading platform designed to allow students to grade and learn from each other. Your participation as an evaluator will strengthen your content knowledge & writing skills.
- Other Valuable Resources
 - o Library Reference Consultant – Odum Library (333-7149)
 - o VSU Academic Success Center – Odum Library (333-7370)
 - o The Quarterly Review of Biology – Instructions to Authors
 - o American Psychological Association (APA) Citation Style Manual (<https://apastyle.apa.org/>)
 - o <https://quizlet.com/36614086/biology-major-field-test-study-set-flash-cards/>

The Biology 4900 capstone research thesis paper and presentation:

- **Topic Choice:** The presentations for the course will focus on “Evolutionary biomechanical solutions.” Research topics must be selected immediately. A list of 3 choices (ranked in order of preference) should be submitted to Blazeview right away because each person will do a different topic. Individuals will be given preference in the order in which the email messages are received.

- **Primary Articles:** As soon as the topic is confirmed, it is important to look for several sources of original research. A primary paper is the original publication of a scientific finding by the investigator(s) in a “reputable journal.” One paper will be used for the class on paraphrasing during the third class session. Four more must be summarized as noted on the course schedule. At least five papers must be covered in detail as the body of the paper. These are to be compared and contrasted in the Analysis section. You must obtain printed copies of any primary paper you plan to use. All 5 reprints must be submitted with your final paper. These should have handwritten notes on the pages that show you read and used them.

- **Bibliography:** These projects are to be based on scientific research and must cite at least 5 primary scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals. Other secondary sources such as books, review articles, and reputable scientific web sites may be used to complete the Introduction, Background, Analysis, & Conclusion sections. An excellent synopsis of the APA Reference Style Format is uploaded in Blazeview. You must use these guidelines!!! By the third week, a preliminary set of references with annotations is due. The annotations are a 3-4 sentence description of the source, in your own words that follows each properly formatted reference citation.

- **Review Papers & Other Sources:** Scientific reviews may be used for identifying primary articles and obtaining general information for the Background, Introduction, and Conclusion. These must be from reputable scientific journals. Tertiary sources such as textbooks, popular articles or books and websites can be used for information but are not usually cited.

- **Thesis Statement:** The topic of your research must ultimately be stated, in your own words, in a concise descriptive thesis statement that is the proposition or focus of your study. This must be included in the Introduction and restated in the Conclusion. Every part of the rest of the paper should connect to and support that thesis statement.

- **Background:** Look into the history and details about the research practices contributing to your subject. Assemble a basic grounding of the science, methodologies, and technology that have contributed knowledge to the topic you will be researching. Background science clarifies the context of the work and makes the oral presentation more comprehensible to your audience.

- **Analysis:** A very significant part of your paper will be demonstrating your ability to synthesize the 5 primary papers you presented in a way that shows you know how they relate to each other. Essentially this section involves comparing and contrasting them by stating the similarities or pointing out the differences. These can focus on the research methods or the findings.

- **Written Paper:** Detailed instructions for the formal paper will be given out and discussed in class. Your paper will be 10 – 12 pages long, excluding title page, figures, images, and references. Two electronic copies of the Initial Draft of the complete paper must be submitted. One in Blazeview which will be run through the Turnitin Software to check for plagiarism and the other will be critiqued by your classmates in Kritik. Revisions should be made and a paper copy of the Final Paper must be submitted along with photocopies of the primary papers by April 15th. If these are not adequate, revisions must be made immediately. Failure to complete a satisfactory paper, by the deadline, will result in automatic failure or an Unsatisfactory grade for the course.

- **Oral PowerPoint Presentation:** The oral reports will be delivered as dynamic, visual PowerPoint presentations. Slides with pure text are not permitted. Include at least one illustration or photograph on every slide. Video clips of the organism are encouraged. Presentation dates will be assigned with 5 presenters each week. Each group of presenters is encouraged to make their class meeting as pleasant as possible with refreshments. At least 10-12 slides for the presentation must be checked by the Monday of the week of the presentation. Each person is expected to speak for about 15 minutes followed by 5 minutes for questions.

Additional Course Requirements:

- **Major Field Test:** This is a comprehensive, standardized examination of your content knowledge that is prepared by the Educational Testing Service and will be taken in the UC room 4167. The department uses these scores to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and the biology program. There will be class discussions about how to review for the test so that everyone can increase their confidence in their grounding in biological science. The Biology Department will pay for the first test. Any student scoring below 140 points will be required to repeat the test at their own expense until their score is satisfactory. You will need to make an appointment on the website: www.valdosta.edu/testing. There is a button that says “Testing

Appointments.” Choose the group Biology Major Field Test and complete the required information. They suggest making appointments early since due to other exams there may not be seats available to test in their office on a given day. You must schedule at least 18 hours in advance of your desired appointment time. There is a \$25 fee for all retests after the initial attempt. You have the option to receive a copy of your score report after every administration of the MFT in that office. If you have any questions, please contact their office at (229) 245-3878.

- **Department Exit Questionnaire:** This is a survey that assesses your experiences as a Biology Major at VSU. There will be a link on Blazeview to this electronic survey.

Obligatory, legally binding small print:

Students with Documented Disabilities: I would like to teach everyone; Students needing accommodations should contact me at the beginning of the semester. Students may need to register with the Access Office for Students with Disabilities (UC Entrance 5, Room 4136, Phone: 245-2498). Those who are experiencing barriers in this course may contact the Access Office (<https://www.valdosta.edu/student/disability/>) for assistance in determining and implementing reasonable accommodations. For more information, please visit VSU’s Access Office or email: access@valdosta.edu. To request reasonable accommodations for pregnancy and childbirth, contact Ms. Myia Miller, Title IX Compliance Officer, at maburden@valdosta.edu. Please note, you will be required to provide documentation from an appropriately licensed medical professional indicating the requested accommodations are medically necessary.

Privacy Act: The FERPA Privacy Act does not allow me to discuss grades over the phone, sent to non-VSU email addresses, or be given to friends or relatives.

Title IX: Valdosta State University (VSU) forbids discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, political affiliation, or disability. Consider my lectures, labs, and office hours as SafeSpaces.

Cheating: Refer to the Student Code of Ethics in the Valdosta State University Student Handbook. A student caught cheating will be penalized ranging from receiving a zero for that assignment or test to failing the class. No first warning will be given.

Course Technology Requirements:

In this class, students will regularly use the following applications:

- Office 365 for access to VSU email and to Microsoft applications that we will use regularly (Word, Excel, PowerPoint).
- BlazeVIEW and Microsoft Teams to access course materials and to participate remotely if required.
- Adobe Acrobat to read and generate pdf format files.

To use these applications, students must have access to a laptop or computer. While it is possible for students to complete some work on their smartphones or tablets, this will not be sufficient in all instances, given the limitations of mobile devices. Hence, access to a computer is essential. Note that the University maintains a number of computer labs, which are available for student use. Laptops are also available for check-out on a first-come, first-served basis from the New Media Center in Odum Library.

You may also choose to list these further resources:

- IT provides a list of recommended technologies at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/it/helpdesk/personal-devices/recommended-technologies.php>
- As a VSU student, you may download and install Microsoft Office 365 on up to 5 personal devices (<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/it/helpdesk/employee-resources/employee-services/work-at-home-tech-guide.php>)

Outside class course preparation time:

It is appropriate to expect that students will spend a minimum of two hours in out-of-class preparation for every one hour spent in the lecture component of the class. The laboratory component also exists with an expectation of out-of-class preparation as well. The university analysis indicates that top students will spend around 300 minutes, or 5 hours per week reviewing, studying, and prepping.

Non-Discrimination and Title IX Statement:

Valdosta State University (VSU) upholds all applicable laws and policies regarding discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, political affiliation, or disability. The University prohibits specific forms of behavior that violate Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities that receive federal funding. VSU considers sex discrimination in any form to be a serious offense. Title IX refers to all forms of sex discrimination committed against others, including but not limited to: sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, and sexual violence by other employees, students or third parties and gender inequity or unfair treatment based on an individual's sex/gender. The designated Title IX Coordinator for VSU is Ms. Selenseia Holmes. To view the full policy or to report an incident visit: <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/title-ix/>

VSU Integrity Statement:

Academic integrity is the responsibility of all VSU faculty and students. Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the Academic Integrity Policy as set forth in the Student Code of Conduct and this syllabus. All students are expected to do their own work and to uphold a high standard of academic ethics. This includes accessing online sites such as Chegg, CourseHero, Quizlet, School Solver, etc. with the intent of cheating on multiple choice exams. Any violations of this policy may result in the academic penalties outlined in the syllabus and may also be referred to Student Affairs for further disciplinary action.

AI Statement:

VSU's Academic Student Conduct Code states that "no student shall engage in plagiarism, which is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were the student's own." Content generated by an Artificial Intelligence third-party service or site (AI-generated content) without proper citation is another form of plagiarism. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or another form of academic dishonesty, please reach out to me as soon as possible.

Turnitin Statement:

By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin, a tool within BlazeVIEW. For more information on the use of Turnitin at VSU see Turnitin for Students (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/turnitin-for-students.php>).

Intellectual Property Statement:

Materials in this course are presented to students in an educational context for their personal use and study only and should not be shared, distributed, or sold in print, or digital formats, outside the course without the express written permission of the instructor.

Academic Support Center:

The Academic Support Center (ASC) provides unlimited, in-person, free peer tutoring in core courses such as math, English/writing, sciences, social sciences, and languages. We also offer 8 hours of free online tutoring via Tutor.com (8 hours per student, available 24/7). Click the Free Tutoring link in any Blazeview course to make appointments. Please drop by our space in Odum Library, 2nd floor, or call 229-333-7570, email asc@valdosta.edu, or visit the website www.valdosta.edu/asc for more information.

Mental Health Syllabus Statement:

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained or violent relationships, death and loss, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. VSU services are available and treatment does work. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on campus at <https://www.valdosta.edu/blazer-wellness/mental-health.php>

The BIT (Behavioral Intervention Team) Team:

If you, or someone you know, needs support, is distressed, or exhibits concerning behavior, help by making a referral to the BIT Team. The VSU BIT Team's purpose is to promote a safe and productive learning, living, and working environment by addressing the needs of students. As your professor, I may contact the BIT Team to seek support for you. I encourage you to fill out a referral if you or a classmate are in need of help. There are several ways to contact the BIT Team: 1) For more information about the BIT Team at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/bit.php>; 2) Email your concern to vsubit@valdosta.edu; or 3) Fill out the anonymous Concerning Behavior Reporting Form at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/our-services.php>